



Steven W. Troxler
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services
Veterinary Division

R. Douglas Meckes, DVM
State Veterinarian

March 11, 2016

To: North Carolina Poultry Producers Raising Organic Birds with Outside Access

From: R Douglas Meckes, DVM
State Veterinarian

Sarah J Mason, DVM, PhD
Director Animal Health Programs, Poultry

RE: Notification and Biosecurity Recommendations regarding the continuing outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

Given the recent finding of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in Indiana, as well as the 2014-2015 occurrences of HPAI in the western and mid-western United States and the identification of cases of HPAI affecting 21 US states, HPAI remains a significant threat to organic producers due to the required outside access. Epidemiological reports confirm that the virus is carried by certain types of wild migratory waterfowl that have been present in the Pacific, Central and Mississippi flyways. It has been found in the Mississippi flyway, which encompasses a portion of western North Carolina, so flocks in our state that may contact wild migratory waterfowl or their droppings are at high risk. The return migration of wild birds to Canada is ongoing, increasing the likelihood of exposure of US poultry to HPAI. To attempt to mitigate that risk we are strongly recommending the following steps be taken for the protection of flocks with outside access:

1. Move all poultry with outside access into biosecure housing immediately.
2. Implement strict biosecurity on these premises. Alert all company personnel, growers, farm workers and service personnel of the increased risk of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. Especially focus biosecurity methods on preventing any exposure to wild waterfowl or their droppings.
3. Monitor all flocks for increased mortality or clinical signs consistent with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, and report any concerns to your Veterinarian, State Animal Health Official or Federal Animal Health Official immediately. The consistent clinical sign in all the current reported cases to this point has been a marked rapid increase in mortality over several days.
4. Please contact us with your questions or concerns.